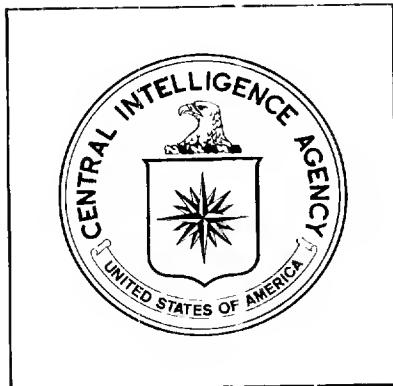


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STAFF NOTES:

Soviet Union Eastern Europe

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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the USSR - Eastern Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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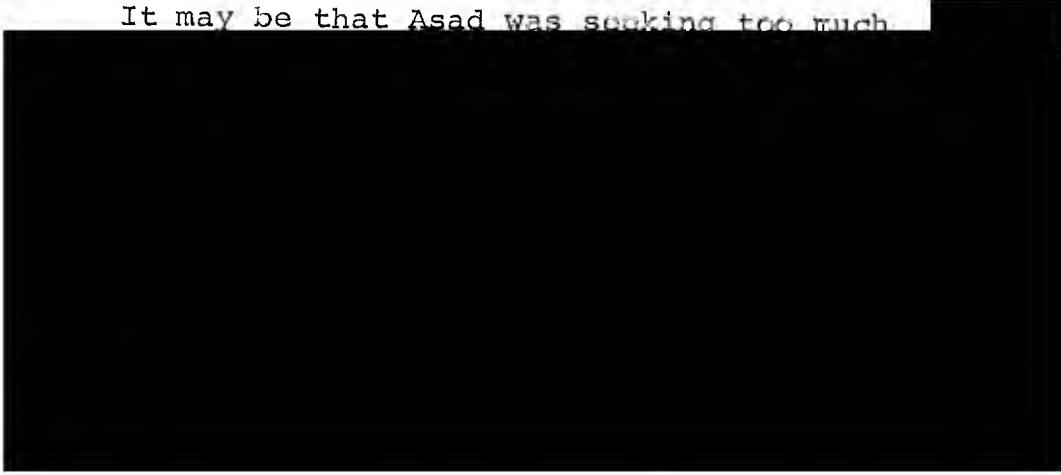
USSR-Syria: Middle East Negotiations

The USSR and Syria have been applauding their recent round of consultations, but there are some indications that Moscow and Damascus are not seeing eye to eye on Middle East negotiations.

Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam and Defense Minister Talas, who had remained behind after President Asad's visit late last week, returned home late Wednesday after intensive discussions in Moscow. The announcement of their departure described their talks only as "friendly and businesslike" and as an "exchange of opinions." This language--along with the brevity of the communique on Asad's visit and the failure of either side to publicize the toasts exchanged by Brezhnev and Asad--suggests differences.

It may be that Asad was seeking too much

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The Soviets may be wary of Asad's intentions regarding new Israeli-Syrian disengagement talks. On the one hand, Moscow seems disturbed by Asad's recent tough statements linking a Golan disengagement with progress on the Palestinian issue. On the other, the Soviets may suspect that Asad wants their support only to improve his negotiating position with Israel and the US.

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Moscow may think that Asad's objectives are at odds with Soviet interest in gradual movement toward a new round of Middle East diplomacy in which Moscow will have a major role.

It is possible that Asad had hoped his Moscow trip would help solve some of his domestic political problems. [REDACTED] Asad included some Baathist party leaders in his delegation in the expectation that he would get less than all-out Soviet support. With evidence of limitations on Moscow's commitment, [REDACTED] the Baathists would be less antagonistic toward negotiations with Israel and the US. (SECRET NOFORN/ORCON)

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Yugoslav Foreign Minister Ends Visit to Portugal

Foreign Minister Minic's successful talks in Lisbon this week have set the stage for Portuguese President Costa Gomes' slated visit to Belgrade from October 24 to 26.

The communique, personal statements, and media coverage during the Minic visit reflect satisfaction on the part of both sides. Minic met with leaders of various political persuasions, including President Costa Gomes, Prime Minister Pineheiro de Azevedo, Foreign Minister Melo Antunes, and even the secretary general of the Popular Democrats, Sa Carreiro--which the far-left and the Communists label a fascist group.

Belgrade's prominent role in the third world, the relatively high degree of personal freedoms allowed in socialist Yugoslavia, and Tito's ability to maintain a nonaligned foreign policy obviously have considerable appeal for a wide range of Portuguese politicians and intellectuals.

The two sides agreed to sign in the "near future" cooperation agreements on economic, scientific, cultural, and technical exchanges. Plans were not only firmed up for Costa Gomes' visit, but Melo Antunes accepted an invitation to visit Belgrade at a future, unspecified date. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Yugoslav-Soviet Relations

The Yugoslav press has mounted an anti-Stalinist, anti-Soviet campaign, according to the US embassy in Belgrade. The spirit of compromise in the Brezhnev-Tito rapprochement that held sway from 1970 to 1973 has clearly deteriorated. The major Belgrade dailies have centered this criticism on the seventh comintern congress of 1935 which forced Tito to accept a Stalinist hack as head of the Yugoslav party, and bound all parties to Moscow. *Kommunist*, the Yugoslav party's major voice also made a sharp attack, equating Stalinist dogmatism--a catchword for proponents of centralism and Soviet hegemony--with treason.

The articles were apparently intended to lay the groundwork for the rumored show-trial of pro-Soviet cominformists. They coincide with vigorous Yugoslav media protests against recent actions by some Warsaw Pact countries that challenge Yugoslavia's independence and unspecified attempts by "foreigners" to meddle in Yugoslav internal affairs.

The chief foreign affairs commentator for Zagreb, for example, has accused the Hungarians of "unfair and malicious" reporting of Yugoslav Premier Bijedic's trip to China. He took strong exception to a Hungarian allegation that Peking had arranged the visit in an effort to spoil the recent preparatory meeting in East Berlin for the European Communist conference that took place during the course of Bijedic's talks.

The prestigious Yugoslav daily *Politika* attacked the new East German - Soviet friendship treaty, suggesting that it contains a restatement of the Soviets' justification for interfering in the internal affairs of East European states. The "Brezhnev doctrine" is still an alarming concept to Belgrade, even though Tito once expressed confidence in the Soviet party leader's assurances that it is a dead letter. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Yugoslav Press Gives Bijedic
Trip to China High Marks

The Yugoslav press says that Premier Bijedic's visit to China from October 6 to 12 has strengthened bilateral relations in spite of differing views on a number of issues. Yugoslav coverage of the talks clearly implies that Soviet displeasure with improved Sino-Yugoslav relations will not distract Belgrade from its chosen course of improving relations with Peking.

The Yugoslav news agency last week broadcast in Russian a Borba commentary lauding the trip. Tanjug said that Peking fully understands Yugoslavia's policy of nonalignment and appreciates the nonalignment movement as a counterweight to imperialism and hegemonism--an obvious dig at the Soviets. Tanjug reported Bijedic's talks were based on independence and non-interference, principles that must be accepted because there is "no alternative in the struggle for peace and progress."

The Yugoslavs have also alluded to the Soviet ambassador's decision to walk out of a banquet during a Chinese toast to Bijedic (*Staff Note*, October 10). The trade union journal, *Rad*, reported that "Bijedic's visit is in accordance with the Yugoslav principled foreign policy" that will not be undermined by others.

The Yugoslav campaign puts the Kremlin on notice that Belgrade will continue to expand its ties with all countries, and other parties--including the Chinese. This could lead to fireworks in the event that Belgrade sends a delegation to the coming European conference of Communist parties. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Zhivkov on the Move Again

Bulgarian party and state leader Todor Zhivkov will "soon" make his first visit to Moscow since October 1974, the Soviet ambassador in Sofia has told his Yugoslav counterpart.

Zhivkov's visit will afford the Bulgarian leader the opportunity to get a full briefing from the Soviets on a wide range of current problems. Zhivkov has been eager to change Bulgaria's reputation as the most sycophantic of Moscow's allies, and has been making an effort to foster a more international image of an independent-minded Bulgaria. Zhivkov appears willing to take a leading role in advancing "inter-Balkan" cooperation schemes, but only if they avoid the sensitive political area.

With Soviet approval, Zhivkov has been trying hard to promote better US-Bulgarian relations, primarily for economic reasons. In connection with the recently concluded Soviet-Bulgarian five year economic protocol plan, Soviet economic planning chief Baybakov admonished Sofia to depend less on the USSR for energy and raw material needs. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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